



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTS TWO INDIVIDUALS ON FEDERAL GUN CHARGES

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that an El Paso Grand Jury has returned separate indictments against 48-year-old **Victor Meneses**, a resident of El Paso, Texas, on seven counts of Making False Statements During a Firearms Purchase and 24-year-old **Daniel Dominguez**, of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, with eight counts of Making False Statements During a Firearms Purchase. These federal charges are commonly referred to as "straw purchases."

The Meneses indictment alleges that on May 19, 2003, Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) agents interviewed defendant Meneses regarding several firearms purchases he made dating back to the year 2000. A records check revealed that Meneses purchased between thirty and forty firearms from different gun stores in and around El Paso, Texas from the year 2000 until his arrest on June 26, 2003. As part of each purchase, the defendant was required to complete ATF Form 4473 where he stated that he was the actual purchaser of the firearms. According to the indictment, Meneses admitted to ATF agents that he was in reality purchasing these firearms for other individuals and was paid \$100.00 for each firearm purchased.

Defendant Dominguez, according to the indictment against him, made false and fictitious written statements to an El Paso area pawn shop, indicating that he was the actual buyer of the firearms when in fact he was not. Additionally, Dominguez represented in writing that he was a resident of the State of Texas for at least 90 days prior to the date of purchase of firearms although he was in fact residing in Mexico. Dominguez was arrested on June 11, 2003 and ordered detained without bond.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and Assistant United States Attorney Greg McDonald is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government. The prosecution of this case is another example of how the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas is implementing the Department of Justice's new gun crime initiative - Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN).

Modeled after the success of Project Exile, Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide federal initiative designed to reduce gun violence in our communities. PSN promotes partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to target violent criminals who use guns and insures that when an armed criminal is arrested, that individual will face swift criminal prosecution and be exiled from the community through the use of stiff mandatory prison sentences. This commitment to reduce gun crime includes nationwide federal funding this year of more than \$200 million, which is used to hire new federal and state prosecutors, support investigators, provide training, and develop and promote community outreach efforts.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

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